

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

ACDA-19 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 USIA-15

TRSE-00 SAJ-01 SS-20 NSC-07 DODE-00 H-03 EB-11 COME-00

SCI-06 FEAE-00 INT-08 AID-20 DRC-01 /180 W

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R 101250Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5594

INFO AMEMBASY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION NATO

USDOCOSOUTH

COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 1012

E.O. 11652: GDA

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MT, US , LY

SUBJ: SIXTHFLT FLEET AND MALTA

REF: VALLETTA 0944 (NOTAL)

1. DURING CALL ON AMBASSADOR JUNE 7, NATIONALIST MP MARIO FLEICE REFERRED TO RECENT EXCHANGE IN PARLIAMENT ON SIXTH FLEET (REFTTEL). FELICE SAID PRESS REPORTING OF EXCHANGE WAS NOT COMPLETE. WHEN FLEICE STATED IN PARLIAMENT THAT HE OPPOSED MINTOFF'S POLICY OF EXCLUDING SIXTH FLEET FROM VISITS TO MALTA, HE SAID MINTOFF REPLIED THAT LABOR PARTY'S FOREIGN POLICY WAS "FLEXIBLE". ALTHOUGH HE THEN WENT ON TO REITERATE POLICY OF EXCLUSION.

2. IN BRIEF PERSONAL EXCHANGE AS THEY WERE LEAVING PARLIAMENT, FLEICE SAID MINTOFF JOKINGLY ASKED HIM IF HE WOULD CROSS THE FLOOR AND JOIN LABOR PARTY RANKS IF
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MINTOFF AGREED TO ALLOW SIXTH FLEET TO VISIT MALTA.

FLEICE SAID HE REPLIED THAT SIXTH FLEET ISSUE WAS NOT THE ONLY QUARREL HE HAD WITH LABOR GOVERNMENT.

3. IN RECOUNTING FOREGOING TO AMBASSADOR, FLEICE SAID HE BELIEVES THAT MINTOFF IS DELIBERATELY TRYING TO KEEP HIS OPTIONS OPEN AS A RESULT OF COOLING RELATIONS WITH QADHAFI AND LIBYA. EXISTING ISSUES BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES (E.G. BRITISH BASES ON MALTA, PRESENCE OF ISRAELI EMBASSY ON MALTA, FIR AND MEDIAN LINE) HAVE PRESUMABLY BEEN SHARPENED BY RECENT SIGNATURE OF AGREEMENT FOR OIL EXPLORATION BETWEEN TEXACO AND GOM. IF THIS AGREEMENT, AS SEEMS LIKELY, IS FOLLOWED BY AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER OIL COMPANIES COVERING RIGHTS IN WATERS CLAIMED BY LIBYA, SITUATION COULD DETERIORATE FURTHER.

4. FLEICE SAID HE FELT IT WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE FOR US, OR EVEN NATIONALISTS PARTY TO TRY TO PUSH MINTOFF AT THIS POINT. MINTOFF TENDS TO REACT VIGOROUSLY TO WHAT HE INTERPRETS AS PRESSURE. AMBASSADOR AGREED. MINTOFF'S OWN POLICIES ON OIL EXPLORATION RIGHTS APPEAR TO BE SHAPING EVENTS IN A MANNER PRNTENTIALLY FAVORABLY TO US.GETZ

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